

Human Services Funding Committee / Community Development Committee (CDC)
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PUBLIC HEARING
January 21, 2009

Committee Members Attending: Jana McClure, Mary Jane Laus, Paulette Brooks

Town Staff: Roy Rosenblatt

Absent Committee Members: Isaac BenEzra, Claude Tellier, Lewis Rudolph

Public Attending: Hwei-Ling Greeney, Committee on Homelessness; Reikka Simla, Chair Amherst Committee on Homelessness; Stanley Maron, Amherst Committee on Homelessness; Inge Ackermann; Bob Ackerman, Committee on Homelessness; Cheryl Zoll, Amherst Survival Center; Reneé Moss, Big Brothers Big Sisters; Joe Henefield, Service Net; Jon Nelms, Amherst Committee on Homelessness; Rosamond Wulsin, self employed, Eleanor Maniere-Gatti, Amherst Committee on Homelessness; Mary Streeter; Harry Brooks.

Handout: Community Development Director's recommendation to the Community Development Committee for Town's 2009 CDBG funding, dated January 21, 2009.

The Public Hearing for the Community Development Block Grant [CDBG] funding began at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, January 21, 2009 in the Glass Room of the Bangs Center, Amherst, MA. Paulette Brooks called the meeting to order and welcomed those present. After introductions around the room, Mr. Rosenblatt gave a brief history of the CDBG town funding projects in the past. He also explained the town's present status of mini-entitlement community and explained that funding must be for an eligible activity and must meet a national objective to serve 51% of residents either with low or moderate income. The first public hearing that was scheduled for January 7, 2009 was cancelled. The Amherst Committee on Homelessness supports \$450,000. to purchase property to house homeless persons. The Town will request proposals from eligible social service agencies to purchase property to house homeless individuals. The Request for Proposal will require the selected social service agency to also manage the property and provide social services as needed.

Mr. Bob Ackerman told the Community Development Committee that the project has the unanimous approval from the Homelessness Committee and that Mr. Rosenblatt has been working with their committee. He also thanked Cheryl Zoll, director of the Amherst Survival Center for the great job the organization is doing and the medical clinic servicing the clients. Ms. Zoll commented that the proposed project for homeless individuals fits the Housing First criteria. Ms. Reikka Simba read a statement of support for the project to the Committee. *See attached.* Ms. Hewi Ling Greeney supports the project and reminded those present of past efforts to address the homelessness problem, beginning in 2006, when Mr. Kenneth Mosakowski addressed the Amherst Select Board and the Homelessness Committee was formed to study the problem. Since that time, an outreach worker was funded to address the ongoing problem through the agency, Safety Net. Ms. Minere-Gatti voiced her support of the project and commented on President Obama's recent inauguration ceremony and Rev. Lowrey's closing comments about service to others. Mr. Nelms supports the project and encouraged the project to be a strictly local and not regional solution.

Mr. Rosenblatt has requested proposals from all social service agencies providing services to Amherst low/mod income individuals and families. He is recommended that the following be included in the Town's 2009 CDBG application;

Continuation of the childcare tuition assistance program

Funding for Big Brother Big Sisters site-based mentoring Program
Family Outreach of Amherst's Emergency Assistance Fund
Amherst Survival Center's Family Night.

The grant cannot supplant town or state funded activities.

The funding for the purchase of properties will be only for homeless individuals, rather than families. Families generally have more support services available than homeless individuals. The grant is due February 13th, and the next meeting of the Community Development Committee will be February 4th, 2008 at 5:30 p.m. in the Bangs Center. The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Paulette Brooks